

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building Room 500

July 11, 2003

Members Present

Sherry Hailey
Melodie Friedebach
Margaret Franklin
Valeri Lane
Elizabeth Spaugh

Rick Horrell
Cathy Fuger
Debbie Martin
Gretchen Schmitz
Leslie Elpers

Tracey King
Joan Harter
Sue Allen

Members Not Present

Donna Evert
Vicki Walker

Sheryl Taylor
Pam Byars

Lisa Robbins

DESE Staff Present

Debby Parsons
Dale Carlson

Joyce Jackman
Margaret Strecker

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions - Valeri Lane and Elizabeth Spaugh called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made.

Approval of May SICC Minutes - The Council reviewed the minutes. Sherry Haley made a motion that the minutes be approved as written. Sue Allen seconded. Motion passed.

A copy of the attendance log was provided at the meeting for Council members to review.

Valeri indicated that the agency updates will be included with the First Steps Updates and that the information from the Redesign meeting would be interweaved into the Implementation Update.

First Steps Implementation Update

- **Data (handout)** - Debby Parsons announced that Dale Carlson recently replaced Rick Hutcherson and that Mary Corey is out on maternity leave. The information contained in Debby's handout is also posted on the website and is updated on a monthly basis. DESE utilized this information when working on the Performance Report and the Improvement Plan. There continues to be growth in the program. There are two pieces in the report that DESE is continuing to review: information regarding 45-day timelines and eligibility.

Valeri Lane indicated that some intake coordinators keep files open on children until all of the information is received, even if they are not eligible, making it look like the 45-day timeline is being exceeded more often than it actually is.

Melodie Friedebach mentioned that the Reauthorization of IDEA contains two changes to Part C:

- Change the 45-day timeline to “reasonable” time. DESE will need to determine what is considered “reasonable.”
- OSEP will no longer allow states to define developmental delay. Instead they will be imposing a specific definition of developmental delay.

At this time, DESE is unable to determine why the 45-day timelines are not being met in some cases. DESE would like to change the software to allow for a reason to be included when entering this information. Valeri suggested that she would like to see a change made to the software that would indicate “provider not available.”

Debby indicated that in some areas of the state we are approaching two percent eligibility. DESE will be monitoring this. OSEP was interested in how early children are entering the system.

- **Funding** - Joyce Jackman indicated the CFO rebid process has been completed. Covansys receive the award and will continue to be the provider for this program. She indicated that in the CFO rebid process, we asked for a bid on a redesign to move from a parent/child mode more of a web-based program. Would like to have this change completed by March 2004. Do not believe the forms will change much. Should allow providers a better opportunity to see what is in the SPOE software. DESE currently pays Covansys at an hourly rate but when the new contract goes into effect, it will change to a flat fixed rate. On-line billing was put on hold because of HIPAA. HIPAA compliance must be met by October 2003.

Phase I SPOEs are in the last renewal of their contract period. They must be rebid. DESE will be sending a survey to every Phase I and II SPOE via email around the first part of August. DESE will collect information regarding the number of hours it takes a person to process referrals, what happens during the different phases of the program, and will be asking for comments and suggestions. DESE would like for all individuals at each SPOE to complete the survey. DESE will work with OA to develop the new bid using the information collected from this survey. It was suggested that questions be included on the survey relating to duties, geographical areas, funding (adequate funds to cover travel expenses, rent, copy machines, etc.).

- **Redesign Task Force Reconvened** - The Redesign Task force reconvened recently to review the accomplishments and non-accomplishments and determine what priorities are still remaining keeping in mind the budget limitations without compromising the services for children with disabilities. Twenty members from the original task force were present – some were in different positions. New people were also invited from regional centers, agencies, SPOEs, and providers. Anne Marie Wells and Sherry Hailey participated in a conference call with DESE to determine who would be included in the Task Force. The group started out by reviewing what the original recommendations were and determining if they had been accomplished or not. The issues and suggestions from this meeting will be taken into consideration by DESE for further planning. SICC participation and input in the process is critical. The group also discussed the First Steps training modules. They looked at the need for possible retraining and the issues of inconsistencies between service coordinators across the state.
- **Funding (handout)** - Joyce indicated that the handout is the summary of FY 03 and FY 04 information. Now on a regular cycle with Medicaid reimbursements – every two weeks. All of the Medicaid eligible claims have been filed for Phase I and for the onset of Phase II. DESE needs more time to determine the average amounts of Medicaid revenue that will be received regularly.

A question was asked about hearing aides for Medicaid eligible children. Joyce Jackman indicated that the issue is with durable medical equipment also called assistive technology. There have been some difficulties due to the way the system is set, some items such as hearing aids require prior approval. Providers need to be aware that if they go with an item that needs prior approval, that the provider will need to file the paperwork with Medicaid and get that approval so that it will get into their system showing approval for the item has been given. DESE will be working to get this situation resolved.

Sherry Hailey indicated that SPOEs need to address with families on a consistent basis the advantages of enrolling in the Medicaid program. Parents have the right to participate or not participate in the Medicaid program. DESE cannot legally require parents to participate since First Steps and Medicaid are by choice. Melodie felt that DESE may need to research this issue and determine what other states are doing. Joyce Jackman received a copy of the children birth to age three that are Medicaid eligible from Debbie Martin. The SPOEs could use this information to contact parents about the benefits of participating in Medicaid.

The state receives reimbursement based on the fee structure set up by Medicaid. DESE only receives a portion of the reimbursement and not dollar for dollar. Reimbursement is based on a per child per delivered service.

If an assistive technology item is included in the IFSP, it must be provided. There is no way at this time to overrule an IFSP team decision. Some of the discussion of the training services coordination involved the elements of service delivery to expand the resources in the community and other options, so that an item does not just automatically come out of the First Steps program. There may be ways to find the equipment cheaper or at no cost. Sherry Hailey indicated that from the Task Force meeting, they had suggested looking at insurance and parent participation (Sue Mackey Andrews is reviewing). Her report could be sent to the SICC.

Valeri Lane wanted to know if she could review information about other First Steps costs (training, SPOEs, DESE personnel, etc). She would also like to see information about income compared to total costs. Show cost per child (direct services to the child – include SPOE costs). Break out by SPOE to see if there is a significant difference between SPOE areas. Joyce Jackman indicated that her section has all of that data and could review it with the Council at a future meeting.

The funding for the training coordination project runs through the end of January 2004. The Task Force felt that the whole training piece needs to be reviewed, revisited, and possibly redesigned. Head Start and childcare centers are referral sources. Three departments (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-Early Childhood, Department of Social Services, and Department of Health) make up the Redesign and Transition Team (RATT), which has been working to build a statewide training structure for early care. The childcare provider that provides services to the child should be aware of what is available for the child. Rick Horrell suggested that DESE discuss the training coordination project funding issues with the SICC at a later date.

- **Provider (handout)** - Debby Parsons indicated that Stacey Ismail resigned effective July 11, 2003. The handout contained information regarding SPOEs and was pulled from the matrix. Providers are not updating information in the matrix as needed. DESE is working with the CFO to have all providers that are enrolled in the program listed in the matrix. It will be up to the providers to update their matrix page.

Special instructors can be listed in more than one area and be misleading the numbers. Valeri Lane indicated that there is a statement on the web that says “Providers are not required to update their provider information.” – Debby Parsons will check into that – probably just an error.

Debby indicated that there are approximately 2,000 providers enrolled in the system. DESE will be discussing possible ways of oversight. Could create a “banner” indicating that providers must create/update their matrix page. The SICC would like to have DESE update them at the next SICC meeting as to the status of the changes in the matrix. Also, the SPOEs feel they have been put in a position of “policing” complaints about individual issues and the whole system - who should these complaints be given to? The SICC could assist DESE in reviewing these issues.

Working Lunch: Other Provider Issues – Sherry Hailey indicated that she is currently aware of the following provider issues:

- Provider reimbursement.
- Need to increase provider rates.
- Review IFSPs to determine if they are looking the same.
- Determine if what is being authorized on the IFSPs is what is being provided.
- More direction in terms of policy. Example, if there is no speech/language pathologist available but there is a request for speech/language services, can consultation be given by phone? Services provided over the phone could be easily abused but could also be an effective means of alternative services.
- Update the Definition of Services (Code Catalog)(provided, allowed, accepted, etc.).
- Need to revisit the issue of providers of on-site services also providing service coordination services (conflict of interest?).
- Providers cleaning up their information on the matrix.
- Lack of provider availability statewide (recruitment).
- Oversight of providers and practices.
- Training availability.

Valeri Lane also indicated that families need and want choices and with providers not being available, we have not met their needs.

The Redesign Task Force recommended reviewing what options are available to address these provider issues.

There is also a specific issue related to audiologists. Feedback from audiologist indicate that they feel that the contract from DESE is not legally binding because of the commitments with Medicaid. Some audiologists also provide DME and the CFO has indicated that audiologists cannot enroll as an audiologist and also provide DME. The Medicaid provider enrollment contact is Linda Schatzer. Debby indicated that a conference call is needed with Medicaid, DESE, Linda Schatzer, CFO, and Joyce Jackman. Audiologists do not bill in quarter hour increments but instead bill by procedure.

Debbie Martin mentioned that the website for Division of Medical Services (DMS) has a lot of bulletins available. There have been changes in procedure codes. Greg Vadner is retiring effective Aug 1, 2003. Christine Rackers will be taking her place. Debbie Martin announced that she will be retiring effective September 1, 2003.

Compliance/Monitoring - Margaret Strecker, Assistant Director, Compliance Section reported to the Council that OSEP pointed out to DESE as part of the recent self-study that monitoring for Part C is not in place yet. DESE was aware of this and has been working on getting something in place. Following the start of Phase I, DESE has begun doing some monitorings of the Phase I sites. DESE staff has done some preliminary monitoring but will be working on refining the standards and indicators. During the preliminary monitorings, files were reviewed and staff interviewed to determine if the requirements for IFSPs, notices, parent rights, etc. were being implemented. Information regarding the findings from this is included in the Improvement.

There are plans to do follow-ups within one year from the date the SPOEs were monitored to see if the issue(s) still exist. DESE will be determining the procedures to be used when monitoring the Phase II SPOEs. That will begin sometime in November 2003. Some of the hard issues are how to do monitoring of service coordinators, providers, etc. Information can be obtained from the system to look at trends and issues. DESE still has a lot of planning to do with the Part C monitoring and will be an evolving process that will take some time. A couple suggestions included peer monitoring using small teams with DESE staff also participating and interagency collaboration.

To recap the discussion in the areas of data, funding, providers, monitoring. The following are items that the SICC would like to have updates on or are interested in assisting DESE with:

Providers

- Reliability of the matrix
- Has progress been made in getting providers off if they are not providing services?
- Provider recruitment (what are the provider gaps). Include “no provider available” option in the system.
- Medicaid issue regarding the audiologist.
- Facilitators could report back at next meeting the numbers of providers and information as to what they have done with regard to provider recruitment.
- Progress or system of accountability for compliance/monitoring.
- Training system (beyond January is there is a budget for continued training).

Sherry Hailey indicated that DESE will be disseminating the recommendations/suggestions from the Task Force along with the comments from this meeting. Could this be merged into one document indicating status, discussion, and current issues?

Forms training was posted this week on the Division’s website. It is in a format so that people can sit at their computer, pause it, etc. It is a narrative version of a lot of the different issues and changes. This is a new trial for DESE to try and reach as many people as possible. An announcement and the link will be sent via the First Steps list serve. Copies of the videotape will be available at the Center for Innovations in Education (CISE) and the regional centers. Anyone can make copies of the videotape. DESE would like to put more trainings on-line (especially the Orientation piece). DESE will explore the testing component? The other modules may be more difficult to put on-line.

Update on Improvement Plan/Part C Performance Report (handout) - Debby Parsons indicated that this report was sent to OSEP the first week of July. Can discuss more at the next meeting if needed. The Part C Improvement Plan and Part C Performance Report were done using the same format for OSEP. Using the areas of concerns as identified by OSEP, DESE used those as targets. OSEP has changed the

language of some of the indicators since Missouri originally went through the self-assessment. Since some of the areas were noncompliance areas, DESE wanted to submit new data for them to review. DESE is putting this report into a software program for tracking purposes. DESE will be able to pull status reports for the Council at future meetings. DESE will report status to OSEP at least once a year but could be asked for the information more often.

Rick Horrell wanted to know what the operational plan is for the First Steps program (something brief and easy to understand).

Old Business

- Nominations - The executive committee needs to review the nominations and then send formal recommendations to Debby Parsons.
- Distribution of Bylaws - Send electronically to council members.
- DHSS is undergoing major reorganization. Paula Nickelson is now the Division Director of Community Health. Under that Division is now the Section of Maternal Health (that is where Rick is located).
- The Division of Special Education is now hiring again. Have begun advertising. See DESE's website for vacancy announcements.

LICCs-First Steps Facilitators - LICC reports were presented to the Council from Karen Jacobi (NW area), Sarah Parker (SE area), Harriet Foiles (NE area), and Becky Taggart (SW area). The LICC regional reports are posted on DESE's webpage at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/LICCregionpg.html>.

It was recommended that the SICC should send a letter to each of the LICCs indicating to them that they understand that the LICCs have ongoing issues and concerns and acknowledge all their efforts and hard work. Melodie Friedebach made a motion that a letter be sent from the co-chairs of the SICC to each of the LICCs. Kathy Fuger seconded the motion. Leslie Elpers will draft a letter and forward it to the co-chairs for their review. A hard copy of the letter will be sent with the Parent Handbooks.

New Business - Sherry Hailey indicated that she received a survey from NECTAS that was sent to every SICC in the country. It asked general questions about the Council, membership, lead agency, etc. – with a short window of turnaround. Sherry and Anne Marie contacted facilitators to obtain information for the survey. The survey was completed and sent to NECTAS. They will send the results to each of the SICC's. If interested in reviewing this information, contact Sherry Hailey.

Adjournment - Melodie Friedebach made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m. Sherry Hailey seconded the motion. Motion passed.